



Catalyst Grant Program Grant Guidelines

2023-2024 Cycle



TACA - The Arts Community Alliance
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OVERVIEW OF TACA & CATALYST GRANT PROGRAM

The mission of TACA – The Arts Community Alliance – is to support excellence and impact in the arts through grant-making, capacity building, and thought leadership. We envision an innovative, inclusive, sustainable cultural sector, recognized for its essential contribution to a vibrant, prosperous community.

Since its founding in 1967, TACA has worked to establish North Texas' arts community as one of the strongest in the nation. TACA blends financial backing through competitive grants and capacity-building activities, like professional development workshops, to support and strengthen arts organizations. Our growing investment in the arts translates to new premieres and productions, impactful residencies and community initiatives, and more opportunities for artists and audiences to connect – all making North Texas vibrant and a great place to live and work.

TACA is unique in its business model in that it relies on the generous support of individuals, corporations, and foundations to support its mission. TACA is not a foundation and does not have an endowment. Therefore, TACA's available funding can fluctuate from cycle to cycle.

The Catalyst Grant Program is TACA's largest granting program providing unrestricted financial support to local arts organizations. This grant program is designed to be a catalyst in strengthening Dallas' vibrant arts community and to support art that is a catalyst for positive impact and transformation.

BASIC ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible to apply for funding, an organization must:

- Have 501(c)3 nonprofit organization status as of November 17, 2022, with an explicit organizational focus to provide significant arts programming for live, public audiences in Dallas County;
- Present or produce arts programming that includes dance, literary arts, music, theater, and/or visual arts;
- Be able to provide clear financial reports documenting 12 months of prior revenues and expenses.

INELIGIBILITY:

TACA does not provide funding to the following institutions:

- Colleges/Universities/High Schools/Elementary schools
- Fiscally-sponsored organizations
- For-profit arts organizations
- Government entities or "Friends of" organizations
- Nonprofit organizations that do not have an explicit focus on arts programming
- Festivals/Fairs and other "one-time" special events

TACA prohibits the use of its funds for activities, such as:

- cash prizes
- debt retirement

- loan interest, fines, or penalties
- re-granting initiatives

Grant recipients will be required to report their use of TACA’s funds at the end of the grant term.

REST PERIOD

If your organization has been declined funding from TACA for two consecutive Catalyst Grant cycles, TACA may require your organization to take a one-cycle rest period from applying for a TACA grant. After the rest period, the organization may be re-eligible to submit a LOI.

APPLICATION CALENDAR

In 2023-2024, the Catalyst Grant program will offer a single, annual grant cycle for funding, with a pre-application cycle in Fall 2023 and the full application available in Spring 2024. Funding will be awarded once in May 2024.

SPRING 2023 CYCLE (outstanding deadlines)

December 15, 2023 by 11:59 p.m. CT	Grant Report Due
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CATALYST GRANTS ANNUAL CYCLE (2023-2024)

Monday, July 17, 2023	Pre-Application Form Opens
Friday, September 1, 2023	Observation Period begins (observations begin on a rolling basis afterward depending on application date)
Friday, November 17, 2023	Pre-Application Form submission deadline by 11:59 p.m. CT
Monday, February 26, 2024	Full Application available
Wednesday, April 3, 2024	Full Application submission deadline by 11:59 p.m. CT
April 8 - May 23, 2024	Review Period
Friday, May 24, 2024	Notification of grant award or declination
Wednesday, April 30, 2025	Grant Report Due by 11:59 p.m. CT

PRE-APPLICATION PROCESS

PRE-APPLICATION FORM:

Organizations interested in applying for a Catalyst Grant are required to submit a digital Pre-Application Form prior to the Full Application process. The digital Pre-Application Form can be accessed by visiting the TACA Grants Portal at <https://taca.smapply.org>. Before you can access the Pre-Application Form, you will need to login to or create an account in the portal with your own username and password (if you have not already done so in a prior year's application).

The digital Pre-Application Form consists of the following elements:

- Basic organizational information (e.g. mission, history)
- Board of Directors/Trustees list
- Staff and Board race/ethnicity summary
- Schedule of public arts programming
- Profit & Loss (P&L) Statements for the organization's current and most recently completed fiscal year*
- IRS Form 990/e-postcard from most recent filing (if organization is unaudited)
- Current Balance Sheet
- Current Fiscal Year Operating Budget

(*) Where applicable, audited financial statements are preferred. If your organization is not audited, you may submit unaudited financial statements.

PRE-APPLICATION INTERVIEW:

As part of the Pre-Application Process, the TACA Grants Committee reserves the right to meet with any organization that submitted a Pre-Application Form if they are new to TACA's Grant process or if there are any questions/concerns about the organization's eligibility or organizational health.

ELIGIBILITY REVIEW & NOTIFICATION:

Pre-Application Forms are reviewed by TACA staff and the TACA Grants Committee to determine if the applicant organization meets the eligibility criteria. Based upon the Pre-Application Process, organizations that submitted a Pre-Application Form will be notified of their eligibility to apply for a Catalyst Grant. Eligible organizations will subsequently be given access to the full application.

PRE-APPLICATION TIMELINE

The Pre-Application Cycle is open for an extended period as part of the Catalyst Grants transition to an annual cycle. Please note that TACA cannot guarantee that programming occurring prior to the submission of a Pre-Application will be observed by reviewers.

FULL APPLICATION PROCESS

The full application will be available to access in the TACA Grants Portal approximately 5 weeks before the grant deadline. For specific dates, please see the 'Application Calendar' section of these grant guidelines.

FULL APPLICATION:

The full application is comprised of two primary components: (1) evaluative criteria narratives, (2) application attachments, and (3) the SMU DataArts Cultural Data Profile Survey.

Evaluative Criteria Narratives

The full application consists of narrative sections that tie directly to our evaluative criteria, which can be found under the 'Evaluative Criteria & Review Process' section of these grant guidelines. There is also an optional narrative section to include any additional information you would like TACA reviewers to know.

Application Attachments

To supplement the information provided in the main application, applicants must also submit the attachments below:

- Schedule of upcoming programming
- Current fiscal year operating budget
- Current fiscal year balance sheet

SMU DataArts Cultural Data Profile (CDP) Survey & Funder Report

As part of TACA's grant application, all applicants must complete their SMU DataArts Cultural Data Profile (CDP) survey – a standardized online financial/programmatic survey – and submit TACA's Funder Report as part of the grant application.

SMU DataArts offers an unparalleled longitudinal dataset, including financial, programmatic, and operational information from thousands of cultural nonprofits. SMU DataArts also supports arts organizations and the work that they do. With it, organizations can apply for grants, get a clear picture of organizational progress compared to peers, inform data-driven decision-making, and pull financial reports to share with their Board and other stakeholders.

New TACA Grant Applicants: All new applicants must enter data for their two (2) most recently completed fiscal years (where applicable). If only one fiscal year is available, only submit data for that one year.

Returning TACA Grant Applicants: All returning applicants are required to have entered data for their three (3) most recently completed fiscal years.

To learn more about the CDP survey, visit the [SMU DataArts website](#).

APPLICATION SUBMISSION:

All application materials must be submitted via the TACA Grants Portal by the deadlines outlined in the 'Application Timeline' section of these grant guidelines.

Please make sure you receive an email confirmation after submitting your application. Late applications will NOT be accepted.

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA & REVIEW PROCESS

All grant applicants are reviewed through a multi-step process using the following weighted evaluative criteria:

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA:

ARTISTIC MERIT & IMPACT (60%)

TACA evaluates an organization's Artistic Merit & Impact according to the following:

- Produces/presents public arts programming and education programming of exceptional quality and impact
- Creates meaningful and transformative arts experiences
- Demonstrates a commitment to innovation and creative risk-taking
- Demonstrates a commitment to supporting local Dallas/North Texas-based artists

COMMUNITY ACCESS & INCLUSION (25%)

TACA evaluates an organization's level of Community Access & Inclusion according to the following:

- Makes intentional effort to eliminate barriers and increase access to organizational programming (For example: relatability and cultural diversity of programming, affordable attendance costs, diverse locations of programming, mediums used, etc.)
- Demonstrates a formal commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) through policies and practices (For example: organization has board-approved EDI policy published publicly; formal plans and progress made to increase racial diversity at staff/Board levels)
- Intentionally engages and advances the narratives of historically underrepresented or marginalized communities (including ALAANA – African, Latinx, Arab, Asian, Native-American, LGBTQ+, differently-abled communities)

FISCAL & ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH (15%)

TACA evaluates an organization's Financial & Organizational Health according to the following:

- Evidence of reasonable operating metrics (For example: sources/uses of revenue, expense management, liquidity, key financial metrics, etc.)
- Demonstrates thoughtful and realistic short-term and long-term financial and organization plans

- Effectively partners/collaborates with other organizations

REVIEW PROCESS

The review process consists of a Staff Review, Panel Review, and TACA Grants Committee Review before presentation for approval to TACA's Board of Directors. Details of each review phase are outlined below:

STAFF REVIEW:

Upon receipt of the applications, TACA staff will review applications for completeness. When necessary, applicant organizations will be asked to revise application materials or supply additional information. **Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.** Applicants that do not submit all of the required support materials by the appropriate deadlines will not be eligible for further consideration. Applications submitted to TACA become the property of TACA.

TACA staff do not score applications. Rather, TACA staff manages all administrative and logistical tasks necessary to conduct a successful panel review, which include:

- Providing panelists with training and materials to ensure that they are able to evaluate applications and performances effectively
- Informing panelists of TACA policies and procedures
- Providing all available objective information regarding applicant organizations to the panel

PANEL REVIEW:

Applicant organizations are organized into panels based on their primary artistic discipline. Applicants are evaluated by panels of volunteer grant reviewers, which are comprised of civic leaders, arts professionals, artists, community and corporate volunteers, arts advocates, and others with arts expertise.

In addition to evaluating submitted application materials, reviewers are required to observe the public programming of applicants in their respective panels throughout the year. TACA believes that by having our panelists observe the programming firsthand, they are better equipped to fairly evaluate applicant organizations and their activities. *These observations figure heavily into the reviewers' Artistic Merit & Impact scoring.*

Reviewers are attentive to the content of the program, as well as the following elements (as demonstrated through the application and observed through attendance):

- Accessibility of relevant information to attendance (ticket purchasing, parking, event details, participants, scheduling, etc.)
- Marketing and promotional messaging about the organization and its events
- Audience and performer demographics
- Attendee experience
- Long term engagement and relationship building efforts with audiences and participants

Panels will convene during each grant cycle to discuss and score each applicant organization based upon their public programming observations, their review of each application, and the panel's discussion.

TACA has a strict conflict of interest policy for reviewers. Reviewers that declare a conflict of interest with a particular organization may not score that applicant or participate in the discussion of that application.

TACA GRANTS COMMITTEE, BOARD REVIEW & APPROVAL:

The TACA Grants Committee reviews aggregate scores for all applicants and finalizes award recommendations. An organization's recommended award, if any, is determined using a matrix that accounts for the following variables:

- Budget size
- Panel review score
- Quantity of applications received
- Amount of funds available for the grant program

Once award recommendations are finalized, the TACA Grants Committee presents final award recommendations to the TACA Board of Directors for final approval.

AWARD NOTIFICATION:

Applicant organizations will be notified of TACA funding decisions by the dates outlined in the 'Application Timeline' section of these grant guidelines.

Panel feedback will be communicated to all applicant organizations.

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANT RECIPIENTS

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

TACA Grant Recipients are required to complete and submit a brief TACA Grant Final Report at the end of the grant term. The report form will be available digitally through the [TACA Grants Portal](#). More information on this report form will be provided along with instructions toward the end of the grant term. Completion of the TACA Grant Final Report is required for future funding by TACA.

RECOGNITION REQUIREMENTS:

TACA receives contributions from generous individual, corporate, and foundation donors in the community. To reinforce the importance of their gifts, we need TACA's donors to see and understand the connection between their contribution to TACA and TACA Grant Recipients. Public recognition of this grant is important to sustain and encourage future contributions.

If granted, TACA Grant Recipients will be asked to credit and acknowledge TACA’s support at the level that best represents the grant amount awarded. More details about recognition requirements will be provided in the Grant Award Agreement at the end of each grant cycle.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Organizations interested in applying for a Catalyst Grant are encouraged to thoroughly review the granting guidelines, application requirements, and evaluative criteria before beginning the application process. If you have any questions about eligibility of your organization or the granting process, please contact Anne Kogan, TACA’s Programs Manager, at anne.kogan@taca-arts.org.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

How do I complete the digital Pre-Application Form?

To access and complete the digital Pre-Application Form:

- Visit the TACA Grants Portal at <https://taca.smapply.org/>
- Select “Register” (or “Log In” if you already have an account) and follow the prompts
- Under “Programs”, select the Catalyst Grant program and click the red “Apply” button
- Complete the eligibility quiz and the Pre-Application Form tasks, and submit the application

Can my organization request a specific grant amount? How are grant amounts determined?

Applicants do not ask for a specific grant amount. Rather, grant amounts are determined through a tiered system that accounts for your organization’s average aggregate score on our evaluative criteria, budget size, the quantity of applications received, and the total amount of funds we have raised to distribute each cycle.

Will my organization receive any feedback after each grant cycle is complete?

Yes – TACA distributes feedback/comments from our grant reviewers to all applicants after each grant cycle.

Who reviews applications? Will the reviewers be the same for each cycle?

Grant applications are reviewed by panels of volunteer grant reviewers, which are comprised of civic leaders, arts professionals, artists, community and corporate volunteers, arts advocates, and others with arts expertise. Generally, we will utilize many of the same grant reviewers for each cycle so they can observe programs of assigned organizations and become familiar with each applicant over a longer period.

What is SMU DataArts?

SMU DataArts is an independent non-profit organization that specializes in data collection, security, and analysis. Their mission is to empower the cultural sector with high-quality data and resources to strengthen nonprofits’ vitality, performance, and public impact. Their flagship service, the Cultural Data Profile (CDP), is used by thousands of cultural organizations each year, including TACA. To learn more, visit <https://culturaldata.org/>.

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